

with best wishes

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VIJAYANAGAR — A SEAT OF MUSIC

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The 14th, 15th and 16th Centuries saw the birth and the triumphant growth of the Vijayanagar empire, an empire which contributed abundantly to the development of Religion, Literature, Art and Politics. In the development of all these varied spheres, its Emperors contributed much of their time, energy and wealth. An interesting and instructive story of Religion, Literature, Art and Political thought of this empire—nay of any empire—can be written intelligibly only if it is built on the solid foundation of chronological data, provided by dynastic History, which alone can furnish such details. In addition to this, other sources like, the writings of some of her Kings, the chronicles left by foreign travellers like Paes, Nunez and Saletore, and last but not least the evidences still found in her temples and other archeological remains, bear witness to the glorious days of the Vijayanagar empire.

The whole of India, South of the Vindhya including Malabar fell into the hands of the Mussalmans, somewhere about the year 1336 A.D., and many garrisons were set up in important places like Madurai. The invasions of Muhammad Bin Tuglak and the troubles caused by chieftains of other small states, created a feeling of unity between the Hindus of the South and it was this which in the end resulted in the founding of the Vijayanagar empire. It was at this time about 1336 A.D. that this new kingdom came into existence as a saviour of Hinduism. The great task of establishing a new empire fell to the lot of Harihara I and his four brothers, whose chief aim was to check the onslaught of Islam. He and his brothers and successors ruled all the territory South of the Tungabhadra river and for nearly 300 years saved the Hindu dharma in all the area from ruin. Harihara I and his brothers Kempa, Bukka, Marappa and Muddappa, expanded the empire far down to Madurai in the South. Within ten years after the foundation of the Kingdom, a considerable portion of the southern peninsula was conquered by Harihara I, his brothers and generals. This is testified by various stone inscriptions of Harihara I in various parts of the country.

After setting up the empire on a firm basis, Harihara I (A.D. 1336—1343), Bukka I (A.D. 1343—1379), and Harihara II (A.D. 1379—1799) turned their attention to the revival of Hindu dharma with the help of Vidyātirta, the head of the monastery at Sringeri. This great vĕdic teacher collected round him many disciples among whom was Bhārati Tirta, who was the virtual head of the Sringeri mutt under Vidyātirta. Vidyātirta and his disciples Bhārati Tirta and Vidyāranya, in addition to their literary and religious activities, also helped the early Vijayanagar kings with their advice, in their government of the people. Harihara I made gifts of land to the mutta at Sringeri. Bukka I visited the mutta in A.D. 1356 and paid respects to Vidyātirta, whom he considered to be his guru. Harihara is said to have acquired the empire of knowledge unattainable by the grace of Vidyāranya.

Vidyāranya, the most important figure in the political and religious spheres of the Vijayanagar empire, was the son of Sāranga-pāni and came from Bailāranya. He was born about 1268 or 1296 A.D. He was ordained as a sanyasi in A.D. 1331 and was known as Vidyāranya after that. Before his initiation he was known as Madhava. He lived till 1386. His guru was Vidyāsankara, who occupied the guru pita of the advaita mata at Sringeri. Vidyāranya became not only the spiritual preceptor, but was also the minister under Bukka I and other early Vijayanagar kings. He had such a wide knowledge of the Vēdas and Vēdāngās, that it was believed that there was none to compare with him in this.

Music is believed to have been derived from the Sāmavēda by Brahma and through many long centuries it developed into a highly scientific system through the labours of many eminent writers. Even before the Natya Sastra was written by Bharata, there existed in the South an independent system of music. Bharata himself says that the region where this system existed lay between the Vindhya and the ocean in the South. The system propounded by Bharata developed steadily from the second century to the fifteenth century A.D. In Vijayanagar the impetus for the growth of music was given by her rulers, who were deeply devoted to the art. Many of them were themselves well versed in the art. The earliest work to be written in this empire was the Sangita Sara of Vidyāranya.

(Mysore archaeological report for 1916 p. 58.)

To the music World, Vidyāranya was famed not only for his deep erudition of the vēdas, and vēdāngas, but he was also a great musicologist and musician. He has left important landmarks in the science of music in his work, the "Sangita Sāra." There is no doubt about the writing and existence of this work, but the labours of scholars have not been fruitful so far, in bringing it to light. Had it not been for the references made to it by Govinda Dikshitar in his "Sangita Sudhā," we would not possess even the little knowledge we have of him and his work. Govinda Dikshitar writing the work under the name of his patron and master Raghunatha Naik of Tanjore, expresses his indebtedness to Vidyāranya in the following words.

which means, "after consulting the Sangita Sāra written by the holy Vidyāranya."

That the writer of the "Sangita Sudhā" is Govinda Dikshita, is evidenced by his son Venkatamakhi in his "Chaturdaṇḍi-prakāśika." The mēla and rāga chapters of the Sudhā have become very valuable in the History of music and in the development of the melāpaddadhi, and rāgās. This treatise throws much light on the Sangita Sara written by Vidyāranya, the versatile minister of Bukka I. It is a unique fact that the authors of these two works were both great scholars and musicians and also the ministers of eminent rulers, one of Tanjore and the other of Vijayanagar. The loss of the great work, has been made up in a very small way, by Govinda Dikshitar who having had access to it, refers to the learned author and his work and theories. Fortunately for us, he has quoted largely from it, thus proving its authenticity.

Govinda Dikshitar has helped to establish the fact that the term 'mēla,' in the sense, with which we use it now, came into use as early as the 14th Century A. D. Vidyāranya is perhaps the first musicologist to bring into vogue the terms mēla and janya, and his mention of the fifteen mēlas and their janyas resulted in the gradual disappearance of earlier classification of rāgās like the cramas and murchanas of Bharata, the Mārgi rāgās and the Pūrva sprasiddha and Ādhūnaprasiddha ragas of Sārṅgadēva. This new classification into mēlas and janyas, in other words genus and specie, brought into its fold all the possible varieties of rāgās.

*Sangita Sudhā—Ch II V-403.

Vidyāraṇyas mēlas are fifteen in number. They are Nattarāga, Gurjari, Varāti, Srirāga, Bhairavi, Sankarābharana, Vasantabhairavi, Samantamēla, Kambhōdi, Mukhāri, Suddharamakriya, Kēdaragaula, Hijjuji and Dēsākshi. The lakshanas of these fifteen and their fifty janyas are also quoted by Gōvinda Dikshitar. For example, Nattarāga, he says has sa, pa and ma assuddha svaras, ri and da as shatsruti, ga and ni as antara and kākali. Sa is graha, nyāsa, amsa, and also vādi svāra. Pa is samvādi, ga and ni are anuvadis and ri and da are vivadis. This raga is the same as the modern Nāta.*

The mēlas of Vidyāraṇya, present certain interesting and important facts. From the description of Nāta, we may conclude that the sixteen svāra names have been taken into account, using three rishabhas, three gāndhāras, two madhyamas, three dhai-vatas and three nishādas. Sa and pa have no varieties. The same number and varieties of svaras are seen in Venketamakhi's classification of mēlas also. Mukhāri, which was accepted as the suddha mēla by some later writers, by reason of its taking the lowest pitched variety of the svaras, is the eleventh mēla in Vidyāraṇyas list. So the concept of Mukhāri as the suddha mēla, could be said to have been conceived even as early as the 14th Century by Vidyāraṇya. It is possible that Rāmāmātya followed Vidyāraṇya when he called Mukhāri his suddha scale. The intervals such as panchasruti ri and da, shatsruti ri and da and chyuta panchama ma had already come into vogue during the time of Vidyāraṇya.

Comparing the mēlas of Vidyāraṇya and Venketamakhi, we find that many of the mēlas of the former were later absorbed into the 72 mēlakarta scheme, sometimes with different names. Gurjari, second in the list of Vidyāraṇyas mēlas became Māyāmālavagaula the fifteenth in Venketamakhi's mēlas. Nāta and Varāli became Chalanāta and Jālavarāli, though in actual practise they are still known as Nāta and Varāli. Srirāga became Kharaharapriya, Bhairavi became Nātabhairavi, Āhari became Kiravāni, Vasantabhairavi-Vakulabharanam, Suddharāmakriya was renamed Kāmavardhani, Kēdaragaula - Harikambhoji, Hejjuji-Gāyakapriya, and Dēsākshi - Sūlini. The fifteen mēlas have been described, giving the svaras taken, the graha, nyāsa and amsa svaras, the vādi samvādi, anuvādi, and vivādi notes and their gānakāla. Vidyāraṇyas fifty janyas are placed under these fifteen mēlas.

* Sangita Sudha—Ch II Verses 414-419

Another long passage in the sangita sudha expresses Sri Vidyāraṇyas principles enumerated in the Sangita sāra, regarding the procedure for elaborating a raga—Rāga ālāpana. The six stages of rāga ālāpana defined by him are Akshiptika, Raga Varuhani, Vidāri, Stāyi, Vartani and nyāsa. The first is the introductory part of the ālāpana. The second, third and fourth together known as eduppu, is the main part of the ālāpana. Vartani is now known as tanam and the last is muktāyi according to modern practise. Vidyāraṇyas ideas on rāga and rāga ālāpana had a lasting and indelible effect on the development of the music of later times.

The Prakīrnadhyāya of Sangita Sudha gives another extract from Sangita Sāra dealing with a music performance and the qualifications of a musician, both as regards to theory and practise of music.

The following are the doshas of a musician according to Sri Vidyāraṇya. Using, ungrammatical and uneuphonious words, sluggishness in applying gamakas to the padas or words, lack of knowledge of the lakshana of prabandhas, ignorance of the appropriate rasas of the ragas, not being able to maintain the underlying rhythm of the song and not being able to recognise the slightest rise or fall in the gati, not singing in the given stāyi and not adhering to the gānakāla niyama. One who does not avoid these defects will be considered to be an inferior singer or "Kēvalagāyaka"*

Vidyāraṇya now goes on to enumerate the gunas or requisites of a good singer. He should possess a pleasing voice, a knowledge of where the song begins and where it ends; he should be well versed in the lakshanas of Raganga, Bhasanga, Kriyanga and Upanga ragas; he should be conversant with the ela and other prabandhas, varieties of tana and alapti; when he sings the mandra stāyi notes, the gamakas should rise without effort; he should have a good control over his voice and should be an expert in the suladi and other important talas; proficiency in measuring the value of srutis and svaras is necessary, prabandhas should be sung easily; he should be a master of the varieties of prabandhas like Suddha, Chayalaga and Sankirna and the various

*Sangita Sudha. Ch.: III Verses 35-39

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kakus and gamakas and he must be proficient in elaborating the music according to the stayis (alankaras). Such a one who has attained all these gunas, can be said to be a proficient musician according to Vidyārapya.* From the data we have of the Saṅgita Sāra, it is evident that it must have been a veritable mine of knowledge regarding the various aspects of music during the fourteenth century.

Music continued to grow in Vijayanagar under its kings among whom Immadi Deva Raja (A. D. 1446-1465) can be said to have contributed much by his patronage of Chatura Kallinātha. Due to the encouragement extended to him by this King, Kallinātha wrote an extensive commentary of Saṅgitaratnākara of Sārṅgadēva. After Bharatas Nāṭya Sāstra, many works were written on the science of music, the greatest of these being the Saṅgita Ratnākara written in the 13th century. Both the Nāṭya Sāstra and Saṅgitaratnākara were made intelligible by the many commentaries written on them. Of these Kallināthas "Kalanidhi" is invaluable in giving an understanding of the theories of Sārṅgadēva.

That Kallinātha was proficient in dance is indicated by the title He calls himself or the visible deity of music. As he was skilled both in singing and composing he was also called "Rāyavayakāra". Kallinātha's commentary also speaks of some changes which were gradually appearing in the nature of ragas. The grāma music and the grama ragas were slowly becoming obsolete. New musical intervals were emerging in practise with far reaching results in the music of the south. He explains the mārgi and dēsi ragas of Sārṅgadēva and also gives some interesting details regarding certain other ragas Bhavāni he says is used in the singing of the sāmagāna. Gandhāri is liked by women and Pulindi is popular among hills tribes. Gāndhāravalli is sung during the ceremonial offerings to pitrs, Shadjabhāsa was sung during worship.

Kallināthas work is exhaustive, giving a resume of the development of music from the time of Bharata, down to his own times. He has illustrated his ideas with quotations from earlier works. Saṅgitaratnākara which is a work of an all India nature, would not have been intelligible, but for the commentary of Kallinātha. Faithfully expounding Bharatas theories, he has also pointed out some errors in the Ratnākara.

*Saṅgita Sudha Ch. III Verses 40 - 44.

An important development of this period is the Ugābhōga style of Music. The term Ugābhōga itself is a corrupt form of Udgrāha, Abhōga, mentioned in Saṅgitaratnākara and other works of the time. According to Kallinātha this style, had an important place in Vijayanagar music. Udgrāha, dhruva, melāpaka and ābhōga are the four constituent angas of prabandhas, standing for the modern pallavi and charana, anupallavi, and any other additional anga. Ugābhōga consists of the udgrāha or pallavi and a series of verses following, like the ābhōga of old. All these verses and the pallavi are sung to the same tune. Very often, these came to be sung during Bhajanas and Kālakshēpas. They are closely akin to the modern kirtana.

Many Ugābhōgas were composed during the 15th century by Kannada composers. This style is believed to have been taken to the north by the Karnāṭaka vāggeyakāra Gopāla Nāyaka, who was patronised by Alla-ū-din khilji of Delhi. Many Ugābhōgas which exist now belong to Kallināthas time. Kallinātha has also mentioned the mela prastara which was suggested by Sārṅgadēva in the 13th century, made more explicit by Vidyāranya in the 14th century and later on by Pundarika Vittala and Rāmāmātya (16th century) and finally perfected by Venketamakhi in the 17th century.

Side by side with the development of the lakshana of music, there was great revival of music and religion in the empire. Many old prabandhas mentioned by earlier writers fell out of use. Music now came to be used as a happy medium in the social, religious, philosophical education of the ordinary people. Many great bhaktas like Mādhvāchārya, Narahari Tīrta, Sripādarāyaswāmi and Vyāsarāyaswāmi carried the torch of knowledge to the people and helped in elevating the ideas of the masses. Sripādarāyaswāmi was the guru of Saluva Narasimha, emperor from 1485-1492. He himself composed innumerable musical compositions like Ugābhōga-Sūladi, Gita, Kirtanās, and Prabandha and thus inculcated bhakti and right thinking in the minds of the Kannada people, who did not know Sanskrit.

No one before the coming of Purandara Dāsa, has done greater service to the cause of bhakti and saṅgita, and to the spiritual uplift of the masses than Sripādarāya. On account of his mastery of Sanskrit and Vēdānta, his learning and devotion, he became the spiritual guide of a large number of disciples. At that

time there was no common worship in the spoken language of the people. The religious leaders of the time did not care to reach the people, by using a language which they could understand, but cultivated Sankrit and used it for worship. With deep insight he realised that it was musical compositions and not literary works which could serve the people. For this purpose he composed simple kirtanas in simple language, enshrining the best parts of Hindu dharma and religion. He also made it a rule that a few devarnāmas should be sung every day at puja. This was a very important step as it helped the simple worshipper to join the prayer service which he could understand and follow. In course of time they also learned to sing them and found joy and spiritual solace while taking part in the worship. Thus the simple Kirtana achieved in a short time, what elaborate ceremonies and rituals could not accomplish. Other heads of mutts followed suit and soon the singing of kirtanas, accompanied by cymbals and tambura became a common feature of worship. The kirtana had indeed come to its own. Thus the courageous act of Sripādarāya sanctified the kirtana and gave it beauty and popularity. He himself composed many kirtanas with the mudra "Ranga Vittala" the best known among which is "Durita gaja Panchānana."

His disciple Vyāsārāyaswāmi, was the Rajaguru to four successive emperors, including Krishnadēvarāya. He had three distinguished disciples, Vādirājaswāmi, Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa and they popularised the Dāsakūta tradition and Karnāṭaka music in Udipi (South Karnāṭaka) Pandarapura (North Karnāṭaka) and Kāginēla (Central Karnāṭaka) respectively. They composed Gītas, Prabandhās and Ugābhōgas. As we have seen before the Ugābhōga style become popular during the Vijayanagar period. The Dasakūta composers have left behind for the people in general, and for musicians and music lovers in particular, a great legacy of song lore behind them to elevate and enlighten the minds of the people. These songs are today a part of every household and every music performance in the South.

We now come to the Augustan age in the History of Vijayanagar. With the ascension of Krishna Deva Rāya to the throne in 1509, a new age began in the History of literature, and arts like music, sculpture, architecture and painting. Though these received the generous patronage and aid of the earlier emperors of Vijayanagar we can say that it was during the reign of Krishna Deva Rāya,

that they reached the height of their glory. It was a great epoch in South Indian History. Under his benevolent rule, the country became prosperous, the people happy and hence the arts flourished.

During his time Vijayanagar became the venue of great literary figures. Himself a scholar, musician and a poet, he loved to gather round him philosophers, musicians and religious teachers whom he honoured with gifts and money. Patronage was extended to all languages, Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil and Kannada. Krishna Devarāja was also an expert player on the Vina, having been taught by Krishna a great scholar and musician who had specialised in the art of playing the Vina. It is said that Krishna Devarāja gave him a costly pearl necklace and other jewels as guru dakshina. He was loved by all people irrespective of caste, creed or religion, everyone claiming him to be their leader and protector. His reign lasted from AD. 1509-1529:

The Cultural aspect of Krishna Deva Rāya's life may be assessed from his patronage of the arts his generous endowments to temples and religious institutions and his gifts to learned Brahmins and musicians. His deep sense of right and wrong and his devotion to justice is seen in his 'Amuktamāyada.' His humanity and his respect for poets and art is seen from the fact that he once helped to carry the palanquin of Peddanna the Telugu poet, whose ankle he himself adorned with a Kaviganda Paṇḍera. Apart from all this Krishna Deva Rāya himself was a scholar and poet of rare merit. He was also an accomplished musician as is seen from the Krishnapuram epigraphs. His poetical scholarship, religious toleration and his patronage of poets, music, and dance converted his imperial court into a veritable heaven on earth.

There were many sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada poets, dancers and musicians in his court. He had a deep love for dance for which he built a grand theatre. Here dancing girls performed and delighted him on festival days and otherwise. These dancing girls kept the art of dance alive. Sculptures of these dancers in the various temples which still exist, show that these are perhaps the most beautiful ones in Vijayanagar specially in their gracefulness of form, beauty, and postures, and purity of expression.

Bandam Lakshminārāyana was a great musician and lakshanakara, who adorned the court of Krishna Deva Rāya. So his time can be said to be the early part of the 16th century. He

wrote the work called "śaṅgita suryodayam" and dedicated it to his patron. The introductory verses in the treatise tells us of king Narasimha and his son Krishna Dēva Rāya and his conquests. His guru was Vishnu Bhattāraka. Lakshmi Nārāyana also had the titles "Todarmalla" and "Rāyavayakāra." Rāyavayakāra is a corrupt form of Rāja Vāggēyakāra, which means one who is proficient in composing the mātu or vāk (words) as well as dhātu or gēya (Music) of a song i. e. a composer. His work consists of five chapters, dealing with tāla, nritya, svara and gita, rāga and jāti, and Prabandha. He was also the nātyacharya in Krishna Dēva Rāya's court. The emperor had such a high regard for this writer, musician and dance master that he presented him with all the royal insignia, elephants, gold palanquin, two white parled umbrellas and mallāri vādyas.

There were many musicians and composers also during the glorious days of the Vijayanagar empire. We can say that 15th and 16th centuries were noted for the large output of musical compositions, mostly belonging to the realm of sacred music. Just as great religious teachers were sent to the earth from time to time to guide humanity towards the path of righteousness and truth, so also Gods chosen minstrels were sent into the world to give to the people spiritual solace and aesthetic enjoyment. Among those who thus appeared are the Talappākam composers, Vyāsārāya, Purandara Dāsa, Kanakadāsa and Vādirāja, all of whom belong to the time of Krishna Devarāya. Of these Talappakam Annamacharya, lived from 1424 to 1503 AD and belongs to reigns of Deva Raya I, Deva Raya II and the kings who came after them till the time of Veera Narasimha (AD 1507) who bequeathed his throne to Krishna Deva Raya in 1509. Being the forerunner of a long line, of musicians and composers, a study of his life and contributions is taken up here.

Annamacharya is the first among the Andhra Vaggeyakars. He was called "Padakavita pitāmaha" and "Sankirtanācharya". He was born in Tālappākam in Cuddapah District. Compelled by a great devotion to Sri Venkateswara of Tiruppati, he left Tālappākam at the age of sixteen and went and settled down in that place and spent the rest of his life there composing sankirtanams and devoting his time to singing and dancing before the Lord. He is believed to have composed 32,000 kirtanas. These are of two

types, Adyātma Sankirtans and Srngāra Sankirtans. The former are purely devotional compositions while the later deal with srngāra or madhura bhakti. This was a cult in which God was visualised through dignified love, that is, by treating God as the nayaka, the devotee as the nayaki and sakhi as the preceptor or guru. Worship of God in the nayaka-nayaki bhava was considered to be one of the shreshta margas and compositions based on this doctrine were brought forth in large numbers during this period.

Annamācharya's adyātma sankirtans are ordinary kirtanas breathing the fragrance of Bhakti, but his Srngāra sankirtans express the madhurya or sweetness of love to God. These Compositions are important in the evolution of musical compositions, as they are considered to be the forerunners of the later kritis and padams. The sankirtans have mostly the divisions udgrāha and dhruva. Many of them have melapaka. By the time of Annamāchārya, these names for the angas of a composition fell out of use and alternative terms like pallavi, anupallavi, charana and (additional angas like) chittasvara and svara sahitya came to be used. The mudra of the composer is usually found in the last part. The occurrence of yati and prāsa is scrupulously maintained in all the compositions. He has also introduced many varieties of compositions, under his sankirtanas such as Daruvus, Chandamāmapadamulu, Yēlapadamulu, Jakula padamulu, Gobbi padamulu and Ardha Chandrikulu. These are all compositions coming under sacred music and the term padamulu is here used only to denote a devotional song. Annamachārya has also written a treatise giving the lakshanas of these compositions.

From the sankirtanams which have been discovered so far, we see that he used about sixty rāgas. Rāgas such as Āhiri, Pādi, Mukhāri, Sankarābharana, Sri, Samanta, Kāmbhōji, Bhairavi, Bauli, Ramakriya, Varāli and Lalita are frequently used. Some ragas used by him like Abali, Amarasindu, Gitanāta, Telugukāmbhōji Dēsalam, Baulirāmakriya, Mukhāripantu, Menchabauli Samantam, Salagam and Kondamalahari have become obsolete. Ragas like Todi, Kalyāni, Ānandabhairavi, Ārabhi, Sahana, Surati Poorvakalyāni and Bilahari do not figure in his compositions, probably because they came into use only after his time. Among his sankirtans, we also find folk tunes of old like Lāli, Suvvi, Uyyāla, Jōla, Sōbhana, Vaibhōga, Nalugu, Jēḷe and others. The Sāhityam is important in these compositions.

Annamachāryas kirtanas, along with those of his son Pedda Thirumalāchārya and his grandson Chinnaiya, were inscribed on copper plates and preserved in a stone cellar known as Sankirtana Bandāram in the Tirumalai temple at Tiruppati. The text of these alone are available. Each copper plate has six songs, for which the rāga alone is given. The tāla is not given. Outside the bhandāram is seen a figure of Annammāchārya cut on the stone. He is seen dancing and singing in ecstasy with a tambura in his hand. The figure of the tambura seen here shows that this instrument, came into vogue and was used as a drone somewhere about the 15th century.

Annamayyas son Pedda Tirumalāchārya was a poet and composer during the reign of Krishna Devarayar. He has to his credit many poetical works and a Telugu commentary of the Gita Govinda. He was also a composer of sankirtans like his father. His son Chinnaiya is a revered name in the realm of sacred music in South India. He followed the family traditions and was a well known poet and composer. He has many poetical works such as "Param-yogi Vilasamu" and "Ashtamahishi Kalyanam" to his credit.

It is in the sphere of music that he stands unsurpassed. In addition to his many kirtanas, he it was who systematised the methods of conducting Bhajans. He composed many special compositions for use in the Bhajana, such as Todayam, Hechcharika, Dūpadeepanaivadya upachāra Kirtanas, Vasantotsava and Dolotsava kirtanas. The fact that he was greatly respected by later musicians is seen from the fact that even Tyagarāja began his bhajanas with the todaya mangalams composed by Chinnaiya. Of these todayam is the mangalam or auspicious song sung at the beginning of a bhajana. Hechcharika is the song announcing the arrival of the God in procession. It gives warning of the approach of the deity. Dūpa Deepa, Naivedya Kirtanas are sung while offering incense, worship with lights, and food, to God at the time of puja. Vasantotsava songs are sung during celebration of spring festival. Dolotsava songs to be sung while the Deity is carried on the palanquin or doli. These are all songs sung during bhajana and worship. It was Chinnaiya who gave new life and form and paddadhi for the performance of bhajana. It is his paddhadi which is followed even now by bhagavatars. Rightly has he been called the "Mūla purusha of the modern bhajana paddhadi."

Vyāsarāyaswāmi the disciple of Sri Pādarayaswāmi was the preceptor of four Vijayanagar kings including Krishnadevarāya. He was the founder of the Vyāsarāya mutt. He was greatly respected by the Vijayanagar kings especially Krishnadevarāya, who is said to have offered to him his own Royal throne. Vyāsarāya has to his credit many poetical works in Sanskrit and many kirtanas in Kānarese. His kirtanas which are full of devotion to Srikrishna, are still sung.

Illustrious among Vyāsarāyas disciples was Purandaradāsa, a composer and singer of great eminence. He also belongs to the time of Krishna Deva Rāya. He was born in 1494, a few years before the passing away of Annamāchārya. His Kirtanas show that he was greatly influenced by the compositions of Annamāchārya. Born of rich parents and being placed in affluent circumstances he for a time forgot the spiritual mission for which he was born. For thirty years he followed the family tradition and it was through his pious wife that he was brought to his senses and made to realise the futility of riches and the sublime glory of a life dedicated to God and humanity. His inexpressible grief at having thrown away thirty precious years of his life in vain pursuits is seen in his first song "Mōsāhodenello" in Atāna raga.

Purandaradāsa, was more a great preacher than a musician. But in order to make his preaching and teaching more effective he composed thousands of kirtanas, which he used in his discourses. His soul stirring kirtanas are replete with the sweetness born of great devotion. Purandaradāsa used only well known rāgās and simple tālas for his compositions. They were composed not to exhibit his erudition or his musical genius, but they were meant to be merely a vehicle for propagating religious and moral principles. Hence he affected a very easy style of language and music. In one of his songs "Vāsudevānāmāvaliya" in Mukhāri raga, he says, that he composed 4,75,000 padas.

Apart from his kirtanas, he has also done much for the development of music. His kirtanas are all in Kannada, his mother tongue. The language is so simple that the most illiterate could understand it without effort. Enshrined in the songs are the great philosophical truths of the Vedas and Upanishads. He is believed to have created a revolution in the methods of teaching music. In earlier times

music was imparted without any proper method or order. There was no special paddhadi for teaching of music. It was Purandaradāsa, who realizing that a systematic study was necessary, composed the graded exercises like the swarāvalis, alankāras, gītas, tāyas, sūlādis and prabhandas, which would give to the student a good grasp of śvara, sruti, tāla and rāga. The methods which he inaugurated are followed to the present day. Thus Purandaradās laid the foundation for the future development of Karnatic music on a sound basis. His graded exercises, alankāras, Pillāri gītas, ghanarāga gītas and other prabhandas are ideal compositions, for a beginner to master the fundamental facts of the art. Even Tyāgarāja insisted on his new disciples, to first master these exercises before they started learning his kritis. The kritis which were developed and perfected later, may be said to have originated with Purandaradāsa. Rightly has he been called the "Ādi Guru" and "Karnāṭaka Saṅgita Pitamaha".

Some of his kirtanas which have become popular and have given joy and solace to many musicians and bhaktas are :

Nānninna dhyana	- in Kānada
Harismarana	- in Yamunākalyani
Srikāntayenagishtu	- in Kānada
Moshōdenello	- in Atāna
Sakalagrahapala	- in Atāna
Nandatanaya	- in Bimplās
Yāre ranga	- Hindolam
Kaliyugadalli	- Jan jhuti
Jagadodārana	- Kāpi

Another member of the Dāsakūta, was Kanakadāsa, who was a contemporary of Purandaradās, Sripādarāya and Vādirāja. He was a Kuruba by birth. Like Purandaradāsa, he was placed well above want as his father Birappa was an officer under the king of Vijayanagar. He was originally named Timmappa, but it was changed to Kanakadāsa, after he discovered a heap of gold in a field. This gold he utilised for building temples, not because he was a great believer in temple worship, but more because he thought that temple building was a meritorious deed.

For a long time he had an inner urge to become a Dasa, but his final renunciation came only after the death of his mother and wife and after he was overpowered in the battle field. He is

believed to have been revived and blessed by the Lord Kṛṣṇa himself. The song which followed, refers to this incident.

"Easa ninna charana bhajane āsayinda māduvena
Dōharāsi nāṣamādu sri śa kesava."

He now went for his final initiation, to Vyāsarāya, who was reluctant at first to accept a man of low caste and allow him entry into the holy precincts of the Mutt. But later understanding his real and sincere devotion, he accepted Kanakadāsa as a member of the mutt. This caused much dissatisfaction among the other disciples and so Vyāsarāya, to demonstrate his real worth, asked them the question "who is worthy to go to heaven." Kanakadāsa was the only one who gave the answer "Nannu hōdare hōdanu", meaning "if I should go, I go." The other disciples thought that Kanakadāsa meant that only he was worthy of going to heaven and were very angry at what seemed to them was his presumption. Only when he told them that 'nannu' or 'I' meant self or ego, could they understand his greatness. Many such incidents proved to the people that he was indeed a great bhakta and that he had personal touch with God.

Kanakadāsa was a great reformer as well as a gifted composer. He was deeply interested in the uplift of his own backward community. So he went to them and exhorted them to give up their cruel ways and to live a God fearing life. In order to make a greater appeal to them, he composed many simple kirtanas and taught them to the people and made them sing them constantly, thus gradually chastening their spirit and outlook. They soon became ardent worshippers of Vishnu.

Kanakadāsa visited many temples. Very often because of his low birth he was denied entry into them. But on all these occasions, he was granted darsan due to the direct grace and intervention of God. Thus the people came to realise that he was indeed a great bhakta, specially favoured by God. He visited many sacred places like Tiruppati, Udipi, Belūr and finally came back to Vijayanagar. In every place he visited he sang Kirtanas in praise of the deities of the temples. His songs bear the mudra Kāginela krishna. But the songs composed in Belur, have the mudra Vēlapuri krishna. Through his kirtanas and his teaching and his own exemplary life Kanakadāsa, did much to elevate the social and religious conditions

of the people. He lived to a ripe old age and spent his last days in Tiruppati. One day he went into the temple and no one saw him after that.

Though Kanakadāsa wrote several books, yet he is better known for his kṛitīs, than for anything else. Their simplicity, dignity and religious fervour have a great appeal for the masses. Many of his songs are very much like those of Purandaradās and can be distinguished only by the mudra. Some of his better known kirtanas are

Yataravanēndu -
Bandenayya-Purviraḡa-ata tāla
Govindasalahēnannu-
Ninnanā nenēndēno - Kalyāni - ata tāla
Pūrvajanmadīnanu - Mohana - Jampatāla
Kulakulakula vennu -
Bantanāgi bāgila kāyuvē

Vādirāja a contemporary of the great dāsas and a member of the Dāsakūta was the son of a poor Brahmin, Dēvarāmaḡhatta and Gauri his wife. They had no children. One day Gauri went to see Swāmi Vāḡisa the 16th head of the Swāti Mutt, who told her that she will have children and asked her to give her first son to the Mutt. In the fullness of time a boy was born on the Sādhana Dwādasi day in 1480. Reluctantly the mother handed him over to the mutt, where he was named Bhūvara and was given a thorough training in all the sciences. He advanced so quickly in knowledge and wisdom that he became the object of envy of his fellow students. The preceptor noticing this, wanted to demonstrate to them his real worth. So he placed a large quantity of fruits before them and asked them to take as much as they wanted. All except Bhūvara took away as much as they could carry. When the Swami asked him why he did not make use of the offer, he broke forth into the Uḡābhoga "Guru bhaktiyabeku..... baku" meaning that he desired only the devotion to guru, the grace of God and renunciation of the world. This is the first song of Vādūāja and bears witness to his humility.

At the appropriate time Bhūvara was initiated into the sanyasa āshrama and took the name of Vādirāja. In due course he succeeded Vāḡisa as head of the mutt. He now went to Vijayanagar to complete his study of Vedāntā under Vyāsārāja. He became

proficient in argument and debate. He was also an adept in the Chatushashti kalas. He could compose songs and poetry extempore in Sanskrit and Kannada. He has composed thousands of Kirtanas. His talent for writing and composing blossomed fully under the influence and guidance of Vyāsārāja.

It was Vādirāja, who systematised the worship of Krishna in the eight Mutts of Udipi. As Sripādarāja and Vyāsārāja had done, he also made it obligatory to sing Kirtanas of the Haridāsas during worship. In these eight mutts, it was a speciality to sing more of Vādirājas compositions. A padam which was rendered often was "Lakshmi Nārāyana Jaya, Lakshmi Nārāyana." This is a highly devotional composition and all the bhāḡavatas took part in singing and dancing to it, to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals.

Vādirāja visited many places worshipping in the temples, regularising and reforming the worship there, composing kirtanas in praise of the deities and inculcating Bhakti in the minds of the people. At Belur, he composed the kirtanas "Bēḡabāro, bēḡabāro, Velapurada Chinna" in Anandābhairavi raga and adi tāla and "Ānanda māyage" in Surati raga, ata tāla. Later he came to Tiruppati, on the Rāmanavami day and the song "Sevakanelu nanu ninnaga pāda seve" was composed in Madhyamāvatī raga. The song "Iḡaio innadagalo" in Kēdāragaula, Chāpu tāla, expresses in very simple language his vision of Vaikūnta. His Kirtanas are all full of childlike devotion and are masterpieces of literary and musical artistry. Many of them refer to various miraculous episodes in his life.

Towards the end of his life, he returned to Swāti his native village. He was now very weak, but still continued to perform his duties as usual. People thronged to him for his darsan and blessings. He had previous knowledge of his coming death. It is believed that he was translated to the next world in vimana which ascended the skies with his radiant form. Thus passed away one of India's great sons after a long life of devotion, love for the people and service to all. His kirtanas composed for the joy and enlightenment of the masses will live for ever.

The above mentioned Karnātaka musicians and composers, belong to what is known as the Dāsakūta. Sripādarāja,

Vyāsārāya, Purandara Dāsa, Kariāka Dāsa and Vādirāja and others performed many great deeds and miracles, but their greatest contribution to the world and to music was to exalt the kirtana and popularise it as a thing of infinite beauty and charm and the best vehicle for the inculcation of bhakti. Beautiful ideas from everyday life and incidents, from the lives of epic and puranic figures like Śabari, Ānjaneya, Ahalya, Guha, Vibhishana, Seetha, Lakshmana and various others, expressed in simple language, make an instant appeal to the literate and the illiterate, the musician and the student of music. Thus these great composers and their services to music will live for ever in the hearts of music lovers.

Krishna Dēvarāyās rule ended in 1529. But he is said to have lived a little longer. Political conditions during the end of his life was disturbing and confused. He chose his son Thirumala Rāya as his successor, but he died before his father. So he appointed his step brother Achuta Rāya, who came to the throne in 1529. He ruled successfully in spite of many difficulties. He was followed by his son Venketa, but he was killed a few months after his ascension to the throne. Salaga Rāju Thirumala seized the throne, but he was slain by Rāmārāja a son-in-law of Krishna Dēva Rāya. Rāmārāja placed Sadasiva the son of Achutarāya on the throne, but he was ruler only in name. It was Rāmārāja who actually guided the destinies of the empire. He was an Andhra and the ruler of Sriranga and by his statesmanship and bravery become the representative of the emperor in Vijayanagar. He was greatly loved and honoured by Krishna Dēva Rāya.

After the ineffective reigns of the Kings who came after Krishna Dēva Rāya, it was Rāmārāja who was practically the ruler and he dominated over the empire and the successive nominal emperors. Rāmārāja, apart from being a strong ruler, was also greatly interested in the arts. He took great pleasure in music and he was an accomplished player on the Vina. He delighted to spend his time amidst scholars versed in music and other arts. One of the great lakshanakārās of his Court was Rāmāmātya who was a chieftain of the Kondaveedu estate near the east coast. In 1550 Rāmārāja, commissioned Rāmāmātya to write a work on music in order to reconcile the conflicting views on music. Many of the theories propounded by Bharata and Sārngadēva were becoming unintelligible and perhaps unsuitable to the growing art of music. This work was given to Rāmāmātya because he was the grandson of

Kallinātha, the Commentator of Sārngadēvas Sangitaratnākara, and also because he was very well versed in the theory and practice of music. He was also conversant with the earlier lakshana grantas. So he undertook the work and completed it on 21st August 1550 A. D.

Rāmāmātya, began this work fully realising that the various stages of musical progress are not the inventions of the learned few, forced upon and adopted by the uninitiated many, but rather the summing up and organisation of the practises by the former, and the usages to which the later had arrived by instinct. At the very outset, Rāmāmātya emphasises the importance of lakshya or practise, which he took as the guiding factor for his writings. Lakshana he said, should follow lakshya and not vice versa.

His work consists of five chapters including a preface. The topics he has treated of are svara, veena, mēla and raga. The first chapter gives the pedigree of Rāmārāja and also the authors indebtedness to his patron. He also tells us of how he came to write this work. The next chapter deals with the usual topics dealt with by earlier writers such as nādotpatti, svara, sruti and so on. The third chapter on Vina is important, as it is here we find the modern Vina almost in its present form. To Rāmāmātya goes the credit of having simplified the twenty two stringed Vina of Sārngadēva into the four stringed one. It is here we find the incorporation, for the first time, of the tala-cum-sruti strings. He describes three kinds of Vina the Suddha mēla Vina, the madhyamēla Vina and the Achyuta Rajendra mēla Vina. Of these the tuning of the madhyamēla Vina is exactly like that of the modern Saraswati Vina. The six frets are capable of producing the notes in the three octaves.

The mēla chapter gives us a new conception of melas. Like Vidyāranyā, Rāmāmātya also gives us the classification of ragas into mēla and janya. His melas are twenty in number, using antara gāndhāra and kākali nishāda and also chyuta madhyama ga and Chyutashādja ni. But he says that if the latter two are deemed to represent antara ga and kakali ni, then there can be only fifteen melas. The remaining five will be implied in the fifteen. His ragas are also classified into, uttama, madhyama and adhama ragas, a classification which we don't find in any other work. Superior ragas are free from any admixture of other rāgas. In other words they are

pure rāgas. They are suitable for singing compositions, rāga ālāpana and tāna. These are twenty. Madhyama or mediocre ragas are fifteen and they are suitable for compositions alone. Adhama or inferior rāgas are plentiful and they only attract the common people. They are not of high classical value and are not suitable for tāya, ālāpana and tāna. They may be said to be light rāgas. He ends the chapter by describing these ragas with the svaras taken by them, their graha, nyāsa and amsa svaras and the gāna kāla for each.

In describing the rāgas, he has taken into account, only three of the jati, or rāga lakshanas of Bharata and Sarngadeva. This may be because shādava, andava and antaramārga had attained individual status as janva rāgās, by this time. Moreover in ancient times, when there were very few or no compositions to practically illustrate the lakshanas of rāgās, it was necessary to list the lakshanas to aid the student of music to study the rāgas. But by the time of Rāmāmātya, there was a spate of compositions created by the Dāsās, and the Tālappākam composers and various others, which helped the student or musician to acquire, by the study of these, a practical understanding of ragas and their various characteristics. Hence it was not very essential to analyse a raga under these various lakshanas. When a student mastered a few compositions in a particular raga, he would automatically grasp details like mandra, tāra, alpatva, bahutva and so on. Apanyāsa sanyāsa and vinyāsa are merely subdivisions of Nyāsa. So Rāmāmātya deleting all these, retained only the three important ones, Graha, Amsa and Nyāsa.

Rāmāmātyas work is considered to be one of the standard works on music, giving briefly the salient features of the music of his time. In the history and evolution of Music it occupies a very important place, specially in the treatment, of mēla, rāga and the Vīna. Hence, he deserves a place among the great and illustrious writers, who have enriched our musical heritage, and helped in its development, as one of the great musical systems of the world. It is these lakshanakāras, appearing from time to time on the firmament of music, who have shed much light on the theory and practice of music of their times, thus helping us in piecing together an uninterrupted story of our music.

Rāmarājas rule came to an end in A.D. 1565, when he and his brothers led the Hindus against Muhammadan powers, who had by this time formed a strong alliance among themselves. During the historic battle at Raksastangdi, the Hindus were totally routed and Rāmarāja himself was killed. Vijayanagar was partly destroyed by the Muhammadans. But soon the Hindu empire recovered itself, and in 1570 Tirumala of the Aravidu line, proclaimed himself emperor. After him came his sons, of whom Venketa II was the greatest. After the death of Venketa II, the empire passed on to many rulers, but they found it impossible to restore to Vijayanagar, its early glory. Due to the treachery of feudatories, and the revolt of the Nayaks of Madura and Tanjore and the rulers of Mysore the empire gradually dwindled in size, till finally it was completely destroyed by Tipu in 1786.

The contribution of Vijayanagar to the growth of art and music was considerable. The kings were greatly interested in the development of the various arts and were themselves proficient in music. Due to their interest and efforts, music and musicians flourished in the empire, and many treatises on music were written, and innumerable compositions were composed. Many temples and monuments in Kumbakonam, Tiruvannāmalai and Chidambaram and the forts at Vellore, Jinji and Chandragiri bear witness to the fact that the arts like sculpture, architecture and painting also were greatly encouraged by the emperors of Vijayanagar. Due to the fall of the empire, many musicians migrated to the South, to Tanjore and Travancore, where there was peace and prosperity which are necessary for the blossoming of any art. The rulers of these states were enlightened and highly cultured men and hence, the traditions and usages which were inaugurated in Vijayanagar were continued in Tanjore and Travancore, and later in Madras and Mysore, which places became seats of music in the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries.

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